

Vegetation Cutting/Removal

Objective:	To remove portions of oiled vegetation or oil trapped in vegetation to prevent oiling of wildlife or secondary oil releases.
Description:	Oiled vegetation is cut with weed trimmers, blades, etc., and picked or raked up and bagged for disposal.
Applicable Habitat Types:	Habitats composed of vegetation, such as wetlands, sea grass beds, kelp beds, which contain emergent, herbaceous vegetation or floating, aquatic vegetation.
When to Use:	When the risk of oiled vegetation contaminating wildlife is greater than the value of the vegetation that is to be cut, and there is no less-destructive method that removes or reduces the risk to acceptable levels.
Biological Constraints:	Operations must be strictly monitored to minimize the degree of root destruction and mixing of oil deeper into the sediments. Access in bird-nesting areas should be restricted during nesting seasons. Cutting only the oiled portions of the plants and leaving roots and as much of the stem as possible minimizes impacts to plants.
Environmental Effects:	Vegetation removal will destroy habitat for many animals. Cut areas will have reduced plant growth and, in some instances, plants may be killed. Cutting at the base of the plant stem may allow oil to penetrate the substrate, causing sub-surface contamination. Along exposed sections of shoreline, the vegetation may not recover, resulting in erosion and habitat loss. Trampled areas will recover much more slowly.
Waste Generation:	Cut portions of oiled plants must be collected and disposed.